

## SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN IN RUGBY LEAGUE

### Newsletter 4 – September 2007

September Newsletter Contents - Back copies can be found on [www.rfl.uk.com](http://www.rfl.uk.com)

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### RFL GUIDANCE ON TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

The issue of transporting children has become very sensitive for clubs and parents. The RFL appreciate that clubs could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are returned home or transported to matches or training in a private car.

The vast majority of coaches and volunteers will help out through their genuine desire to see children participate and develop in Rugby League. Unfortunately we must face the reality that a minority of others will join a club to gain access to children and create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with children. Developing credibility is an essential part of any abusers 'grooming process', not only grooming the child to 'make love to their minds' (quote from a convicted paedophile) but also grooming other coaches or parents i.e. becoming the best volunteer. The last stage to enable someone to offend against a child is viewed as grooming the environment i.e. creating a justifiable reason for getting the child alone.

**The RFL encourage coaches and volunteers not to take children on journeys in their car alone.**

#### Safety Measures

If all alternatives have been exhausted and an adult has to transport a child alone there are a number of safety measures that should be put in place to minimise the risk:

- Clubs should ensure that the driver like all coaches/volunteers who have access to children in your organisation should have agreed to a CRB check being carried out on them.
- Clubs should ensure that the driver has a vehicle which is fit for purpose, i.e. passed its MOT and is adequately insured.
- Clubs should check that the driver has an appropriate and valid driving licence.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why and how long the journey will take.
- A person other than the planned driver should talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans.
- The driver should attempt to have more than one child in the car.
- When dropping children off after a match or training session, coaches/volunteers should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally two children would be left off at an agreed point i.e. one of their family homes.
- Ensure that children are aware of their rights and they have someone to turn to or report any concerns they may have. If a culture of safety is created within your club then the child is more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation.

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- Children should wear an appropriate seatbelt that complies with current legislation, and be instructed to behave responsibly in vehicles at all times.
- The driver should have emergency breakdown cover, access to a mobile phone and contact details for the parent/guardian of the children they are transporting.

### **Away Fixtures**

Travelling to away fixtures is a regular event for many junior clubs. Trips may vary from short journeys across town to play another local team or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays (full check lists are available on the RFL website). Even what may appear as the most straightforward of trips will require some level of planning. Communication with all parties is a key issue when planning any journeys: -

- **Children** – they should be aware of the travel plans, venue and time for collection, time of return and any costs. Children should also have a clear understanding of what standard of behaviour is expected of them.
- **Parents** – should be made aware of the above and must have completed a consent form detailing any medical issues that the relevant people should be aware of. Parents should also have the name and contact details of the relevant person in the event of an emergency.
- **Other coaches/volunteers** – need to be made aware of what their responsibilities are in advance of the trip. If the trip is a long journey, it is important that all coaches / volunteers have an itinerary and each others contact details.

### **Late collections**

These can present clubs and coaches with particular difficulties. Parents/guardians should be provided with guidelines addressing the issue and outlining their responsibility and the consequences of late collections. Clubs should have contact numbers for parents/guardians and if possible be provided with an alternative contact number. Parents/guardians should have a contact number for the club/coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.

In the event of a late collection, coaches/volunteers should: -

- Attempt to contact the parent/guardian.
- Make contact with the Club Welfare Officer to inform them of the situation.
- Wait with the young person, wherever possible do so in the company of other people.
- Remind parents of the policy in relation to late collections.

In the event of a late collection, coaches/volunteers should not: -

- Take the child home or to any other location.
- Ask the child to wait alone with them in their vehicle.
- Send the child home with another person with parental permission.

Parents should be informed that it is not the responsibility of the Club to transport children if the parent/guardian is delayed.

### **TRAINING UPDATE**

The RFL will be running some more Safeguarding & Protecting Children courses over the next few months – details to follow. In the meantime let Dean & Stacey know if you want some training so they can put you on the waiting lists.

A number of clubs have asked to host training courses at their club. If you can get 20 people together from your club and neighbouring ones then we're happy to arrange this facility for you.

Feedback has been good from the courses so far with people finding the content interesting and useful.

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## CLUB WELFARE OFFICER

It is essential that every Club running a junior section has a Club Welfare Officer who has responsibility for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children at the club. The RFL has a full job description for CWOs but in essence the role is described below.

### What does a Club Welfare Officer do?

Task	RFL Support
Ensure all coaches & others on the RFL list are CRB checked.	RFL to support CWOs by advising who should be CRB checked, explaining the process and providing resources to support all applicants through the process.
Encourage Coaches to attend SPC course.	RFL will provide dates of Safeguarding & Protecting Children courses via the CWO newsletter, RFL website and email bulletins.
Act as first point of contact for coaches, parents or children who may have concerns.	RFL will supply guidance on what to do if a concern is reported to you.
Report any concerns to the RFL.	Any concerns you may have or that are reported to you should be reported to the RFL who will decide an appropriate course of action.
Ensure the relevant club personnel are informed of any necessary info the RFL send out.	The RFL will send out regular information which can be passed on to coaching staff, parents etc and will provide resources so that you can inform others of the key messages.

### The RFL commit to: -

- Be available as a first point of contact for any issues.
- Provide guidance on all aspects of the role, e.g. CRB checking, reporting concerns.
- Train the CWO to an appropriate level.
- Ensure correct policies etc are in place to support the role.
- Communicate relevant issues regularly.

### CRB ROLL OUT

Remember contact the RFL for CRB forms and advice on completing them. Congratulations to those clubs who have got all of their CRB forms submitted for the 2007-08 season.

## GUIDE TO CLUB PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CASES OF POOR PRACTICE

If a Club Welfare Officer becomes aware of a disclosure of abuse or received concerns or allegations about coaches or volunteers the CWO should report this to the RFL Lead Child Protection Officer. The RFL Lead CPO will report the issue to the Safeguarding & Protecting Children (SPC) Case Management Group.

The SPC Case Management Group will consider the initial report and decide whether this is a case which can be dealt with by the Club or whether it should be dealt with centrally. If it has been decided that it can be dealt with at club level then the following procedures should be adopted.

### A Disciplinary Panel should be convened which should consist of:

- Three club members
- None of whom should have been involved in reporting the case
- At least one of whom should be a senior management member from the club
- If the complaint relates to a coaching matter one member should have coaching experience.

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**The person against whom the complaint has been made must be:**

- Informed of the nature of the complaint in writing
- Provided with a copy of any report or other information which will be considered by the Panel
- Be invited to attend the meeting which should be held at a convenient time for them;
- Receive sufficient notice of the hearing;
- Be given the opportunity to put their side of the story and call witnesses
- Be allowed to hear or see any evidence supporting the complaint, however minors should not be required to give evidence in person and can provide evidence in writing

**Temporary Suspension**

It may be in the best interests of resolving the issue if the individual concerned is temporarily suspended pending the conclusion of the matter. Temporary suspension is a neutral act and should not be used punitively.

**When the Panel has reached a decision it must:**

- Inform the accused and put the decision in writing
- Inform the RFL in writing
- Make sure that its decision is carried out

**Powers of a Club Disciplinary Committee**

- Warning as to future conduct
  - Temporary suspension
  - Coaching under supervision
  - Order the defendant to undertake the SCUk Safeguarding & Protecting Course
  - Order to defendant to attend a relevant RFL coaching course
- The RFL is available to review cases and to provide a right of appeal where there has been a breach of procedure

**OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT & OTHER CONTACT DETAILS**

Emma Rosewarne <a href="mailto:emma.rosewarne@rfl.uk.com">emma.rosewarne@rfl.uk.com</a>	<b>Acting Lead Child Protection Officer</b> Direct Line 0113-237-5013	Mobile 07850 483736
Dean Hardman <a href="mailto:dean.hardman@rfl.uk.com">dean.hardman@rfl.uk.com</a>	<b>Acting Deputy Child Protection Officer &amp; Lead on Education Strategy</b> Direct Line 0113-237-5041	
Stacey Thompson <a href="mailto:stacey.thompson@rfl.uk.com">stacey.thompson@rfl.uk.com</a>	<b>CRB Officer</b> Direct Line 0113-237-5036	

Emma Rosewarne's mobile number can be used as an emergency number to ask for support or to make an initial report of an incident at any time. Anybody who has an issue or a question can email the Operations team on the dedicated email address: [child.protection@rfl.uk.com](mailto:child.protection@rfl.uk.com).

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is 0808 800 5000 - your Local Safeguarding Children Board will also be able to give advice in cases which you think needs statutory agency input.

**NEXT NEWSLETTER**

If you have any topics you'd like to see covered let the Operations team know. Maybe you would like to share ideas or good practice or would like hypothetical questions answered.

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